

DMA Recital
8pm April 20, 2010
Conrad Prebys Music Center
Concert Hall

Eliot Gattegno, saxophones
Xibei Lilli Jia, piano

Program

Sonata Op. 94.....Sergei Prokofiev
I: Moderato
II: Scherzo: Presto
III: Andante
IV: Allegro con brio

Solo Piece No. 4.....Daniel Tacke
(World Premiere)

Piri.....Isang Yun

New York Counterpoint.....Steve Reich

Notes on this evenings program

It sometimes happens that a composer's personality – his physical appearance, his psychological make-up, his social attitudes – corresponds so perfectly to his art that the music and the man become natural counterparts of each other . The music of Serge Prokofiev was his best portrait.

Prokofiev was tall, prematurely balding, with long legs, long arms and long fingers that seemed prehensile at the keyboard. His bodily movements were angular and quick, his gestures abrupt. He had a voice that cut through the air without being loud, and a brusque manner of speech, often laden with sarcasm. He totally ignored social amenities but he had many devoted friends to whom he was loyal.

These physical, psychological and social characteristics are reflected in his music with its tremendous kinetic energy, short and almost abrupt thematic statements and a spirit of irreverence toward established traditions, but there is also in Prokofiev's music a spirit of lyricism, all the more profound because lyric passages occur in contrast to typically boisterous episodes. He regarded this lyric element as very important and resented being classified as a brilliant composer of modernistic works.

It was not a mere coincidence that Prokofiev's favorite recreation was chess. He was in fact the best chess player among composers...and ranked in Russia just below the Grand Master level. The basic qualities of a good chess player – planning, logic, precision – were also qualities that he demanded from himself, and from other composers. He detested musical untidiness, but was full of admiration for technical skill and discipline in performance as in composition.

Prokofiev began his career as a rebel against tradition, but he ended by establishing a tradition of his own. There are few Soviet composers who have not experienced Prokofiev's influence, but the unique combination of kinetic energy, gaiety and lyric poetry that constitute the essence of Prokofiev's art could not be reproduced by the miracle of Prokofiev's physical resurrection, for his music was the natural product of his living personality.

-Nicholas Slonimsky

I strive for a greater simplicity and more melody. Of course I have used dissonance in my time, but there has been too much dissonance. Bach used dissonance as good salt for his music. Others applied pepper, seasoned the dishes more and more highly, till all healthy appetites were sick and until the music was nothing but pepper. I think society has had enough of that. We want simpler and more melodic style, and dissonance once again relegated to its proper place as one element in music, contingent principally upon meeting of the melodic lines...

-Sergei Prokofiev - from an interview with Olin Downes in the *N.Y. Times* 1941.

Russian Composer, Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) began composing his *Sonata for Flute and Piano in D Major*, Opus 94 in 1942. It received its first performance on December 7, 1943 in Moscow with Nikolai Kharkovsky (flute) and Sviatoslav Richter (piano). The work was later transcribed by the composer for violinist David Oistrakh. I have created a hybrid of the aforementioned versions for this evenings program.

-Eliot Gattegno

The three pillars of new music are apprehension, approximation, and disappointment.

-Daniel Tacke

"Piri" (the title refers to the Korean bamboo oboe) dates from shortly after the composers release from prison. Written for Georg Meerwin, who organized a portrait concert for Isang Yun in Bamberg, it embodies the quintessence of Yun's monodic composing: a sound materializes -blossoms- dies away; energy picks up in even richer, upward aspiring appoggiatura figures: the sound dies away in gently descending gestures. -Ritual stasis intensifies into almost orgiastic tumult. -An epilogue whose individual continually mutating iridescent single tones, like temple bells, might be marking the verses of a Buddhist prayer.- The infinitely high, infinitely sustained sounds of the oboe as traumatic memory: a narrow beam of radiant light penetrating the sombre prison cell from far above.

-Heinz Holliger

New York Counterpoint was commissioned by The Fromm Music Foundation for clarinetist Richard Stolzman. It was composed during the summer of 1985. The duration is about 11 minutes. The piece is a continuation of the ideas found in *Vermont Counterpoint* (1982), where as soloist plays against a pre-recorded tape of him or her self. In *New York Counterpoint* the soloist pre-records ten clarinet and bass clarinet parts and then plays a final 11th part live against the tape. The compositional procedures include several that occur in my earlier music. The opening pulses ultimately come from the opening of *Music for 18 Musicians* (1976). The use of interlocking repeated melodic patterns played by multiples of the same instrument can be found in my earliest works, *Piano Phase* (for 2 pianos or 2 marimbas) and *Violin Phase* (for 4 violins) both from 1967. In the nature of the patterns, their combination harmonically, and in the faster rate of change, the piece reflects my recent works, particularly *Sextet* (1985). *New York Counterpoint* is in three movements: fast, slow, fast, played one after the other without pause. The change of tempo is abrupt and in the simple relation of 1:2. The piece is in the meter $3/2 = 6/4 (=12/8)$. As is often the case when I write in this meter, there is an ambiguity between whether one hears measures of 3 groups of 4 eight notes, or 4 groups of 3 eight notes. In the last movement of *New York Counterpoint* the bass clarinets function to accent first one and then the other of these possibilities while the upper clarinets essentially do not change. The effect, by change of accent, is to vary the perception of that which in fact is not changing.

-Steve Reich